

Lenny Winkler

Biography

Lenny Winkler has played an instrumental role in addressing many of the key issues facing Connecticut and its residents as the State Representative from Groton's 41st District.

From managed care and "Megan's Law" to the budget, Representative Winkler has been at the heart of the debate and deliberations on many of the critical decisions made at the State Capitol.

Lenny was first elected to the House of Representatives in a special election in March 1988. She was most recently re-elected in November 2002.

Lenny serves in the leadership of the General Assembly as an Assistant House Minority Leader and the Ranking House Member of the Bonding Subcommittee of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, which has cognizance over state spending. She also serves on the Judiciary Committee and the Public Health Committee.

Representative Winkler was nominated by the Governor and confirmed by the General Assembly in 1999 as an Ad Hoc Member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority for the Southeastern Project.

At the State Capitol, Representative Winkler has many legislative accomplishments and has been instrumental in the enactment of major initiatives in the area of health care and related subjects.

In 2001, she was the primary sponsor of Public Act 01-124, which has been hailed as landmark legislation by medical authorities throughout the United States. This legislation, the first in the nation to address what many health authorities feel to be the overuse of psychotropic drugs by children, merited national and international attention. It was unanimously passed by the State House of Representatives and Senate in April and signed by Governor John G. Rowland the following month.

It requires each local board of education to develop and implement a policy that prohibits school personnel from recommending to parents or guardians the use of psychotropic drugs for children under their care. It does not restrict school personnel from encouraging physician evaluation or from consulting with a medical practitioner with the consent of the child's guardians. It protects parents' rights to refuse such treatment unless that refusal results in abuse or neglect as defined by Connecticut statutes.

She was also a leading force behind the enactment of a 1996 law that requires health care plans regulated by the state to provide a minimum of 48 hours of hospital coverage for maternity patients and their newborn children (the "drive-thru delivery" bill), and was a

primary sponsor of the 1995 law guaranteeing women covered by HMOs and other health plans direct access to their obstetrician/gynecologist.

In addition, Lenny was one of the principal architects of Public Act 97-99, the managed care oversight law which, among other provisions, established an external appeals process that patients can use to challenge the denial of coverage by their health plan. She also worked for the passage of the law enacted in the same year to ban "drive-thru" mastectomies.

Lenny is also the author of several major initiatives to prevent child abuse and neglect. She was a key sponsor of "Megan's Law," which requires convicted sex offenders to register with the police in the community where they live for 10 years after completing their sentences. In addition, Megan's Law allows the authorities to inform the public under certain circumstances when a convicted sex offender moves into the community.

Representative Winkler also played an instrumental role working with the state Judicial Branch to establish an intensive supervision program for sexual offenders released from prison. The program is now operating on a pilot basis in New London County.

Lenny also authored legislation that makes it a felony to assault an emergency room physician or nurse providing patient care, allowing Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses to dispense methadone in a clinic setting and concerning "Do Not Resuscitate" legislation, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Licensure and Prescription Authority.

She also worked for the establishment of a task force that resulted in legislation which allows L.P.N.'s and R.N.'s to receive credit toward their R.N. and degree programs, respectively, and a task force examining the use of unlicensed assistive personnel in critical care areas.

Lenny was co-chairman of the Long Island Sound Coalition and the House Republican Policy Group on Child Care. Lenny is a member of the Connecticut Order of Women Legislators and its former second vice president. She is a member of the National Order of Women Legislators.

She was a member of the Sub Base Realignment Coalition, which spearheaded the successful effort to keep the U.S. Naval Submarine Base in Groton. She served on the committee that planned the commissioning ceremonies for the USS Connecticut, the latest in the Navy's Seawolf class of submarines and the first submarine to bear the name of our state.

She is currently on the board of directors of the New London County Substance Abuse Committee, the Southeastern Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, the Mystic River Business and Professional Women's Club and the Board of Trustees of the Martin Luther King Scholarship Committee.

Lenny is the recipient of numerous awards. She has been honored as Legislator of the Year by the Connecticut College of Emergency Physicians, Woman of the Year by the Mystic River Business and Professional Women's Club and received a Safety Leader Award for extraordinary leadership in the passage of sweeping anti-drunk driving legislation to make Connecticut's roads safer for its citizens. She was recognized as Legislator of the Year by the Connecticut Society of Internal Medicine, received a Legislative Award for Excellence from the Connecticut State Medical Society and was honored by the Hospice Council of Connecticut. In January 2002, the American Medical Association bestowed its Dr. Nathan Davis Award in the 'Member of a State Legislature' category. The award was given in recognition of her leadership on healthcare legislation, including Public Act 01-124.

Lenny has a long standing record of civic and community service. A lifelong resident of Groton, she is employed as a nurse in the emergency room and Pequot Health Center of Lawrence and Memorial Hospital.